

MULTIMEDIA



UNIVERSITY

STUDENT ID NO

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MULTIMEDIA UNIVERSITY

FINAL EXAMINATION

TRIMESTER 1, 2015/2016

BKC2044 – KNOWLEDGE COMMERCE

(All sections / Groups)

6 OCT 2015
9:00am – 11:00am
(2 Hours)

INSTRUCTIONS TO STUDENTS

1. This Question paper consists of 5 pages with 5 Questions only.
2. Attempt **ANY THREE** questions in **SECTION A** and answer **ALL** questions in **SECTION B**. The distribution of the marks for each question is given.
3. Please write all your answers in the Answer Booklet provided.

SECTION A: Essay Questions (60 Marks)

Attempt **ANY THREE** questions in this section.

QUESTION 1

- a) Give and explain **TWO (2)** complementary perspectives of knowledge management (KM). Based on your answer, suggest **TWO (2)** common practices for each of the perspectives.

(10 marks)

- b) There are many roles that a company or an individual can play in knowledge value chain (KVC). Knowledge-packager (K-packager) is one of the examples. Explain what K-packager is.

(10 marks)

(Total: 20 marks)

QUESTION 2

- a) Although knowledge can be codified and transmitted through the Internet, it is still difficult to be traded online. Give **THREE (3)** reasons to explain why and provide examples.

(12 marks)

- b) “Pathway” is one of the 10Ps of Internet marketing mix. Explain what “Pathway” is and suggest **THREE (3)** techniques for achieving it.

(8 marks)

(Total: 20 marks)

Continued.....

QUESTION 3

- a) Compare and contrast between “electronic commerce” and “knowledge commerce”.

(10 marks)

- b) When we look at knowledge as a product, we have to differentiate between the core product and the wrapper. Discuss the **THREE (3)** main items of the knowledge wrapper.

(10 marks)

(Total: 20 marks)

QUESTION 4

- a) Before Apple iPhone came, Simon was the first smartphone launched by IBM in 1992. However, Apple iPhone is now one of the famous smartphones, while Simon is no longer exist in the market. In your opinion, give **FOUR (4)** advantages of acting as a follower (Apple) instead of the first mover (IBM).

(8 marks)

- b) Knowledge markets can enhance the matching process between buyers and sellers of specific knowledge domains. Explain how this can be achieved.

(12 marks)

(Total: 20 marks)

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SECTION B: Case Study (40 Marks)

Answer ALL questions in this section.

**KNOWLEDGE SHARING AS A STRATEGIC ASSET
AT CATERPILLAR INC.**

Caterpillar Inc. (CAT) is a large global manufacturer of heavy construction and mining equipment and a service provider for its products. It is also a major financial services provider. Cat has about 100,000 employees and sells through over 220 dealerships in about 200 countries. The company has experienced explosive growth, more than doubling its size from 2003 to 2006. Reaching so many employees in so many locations and in different countries and time zones had become a major challenge for the company. In addition, there were many newcomers, as well as new and improved products and services; therefore, CAT needed to train and retrain employees and dealers.

One of the biggest challenges facing any organization, let alone a large global one with a tightly integrated dealer network, is how to enable learning across an extended enterprise that includes employees, dealers, suppliers and customers. Another problem was a knowledge drain. By early 2000, nearly half of CAT's senior leadership team and the general employee population were eligible to retire. Also, the industry is very competitive (e.g., competition from Japan is very intense), so employees and dealers need to have the skills and knowledge to compete and succeed as a leader in the twenty-first-century workforce.

The company spends more than \$100 million a year on training. It created a learning infrastructure that includes three major elements: governance, a learning technology infrastructure (mainly Web-based), and an alignment strategy to create a lifelong culture of learning in accord with the firm's business goals. To do so Caterpillar created Caterpillar University (CAT U) to meet its training and learning needs. CAT U uses a universal virtual team collaboration system and tool, a synchronous online learning management system (LMS), and a knowledge network.

Caterpillar's LMS is a worldwide platform that supports both employees and dealers. The LMS has a learner-centric user interface that allows individual users to experience it in a customized fashion. It dynamically constructs each individual's learning plan on his or her desktop and directs the learner in executing the plan.

CAT U enables e-learning through its knowledge management system – the Caterpillar Network. Caterpillar employees, dealers, suppliers, and customers exchange information, share knowledge, ask questions, and contact subject-matter experts around the world through 4,000 communities of practice organized around specific business-related topics. The knowledge network provides a deep mine of searchable data, giving users access to information created everywhere, anytime, in every area of the organization.

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The company also uses the CAT Knowledge Network to help preserve the knowledge of retiring executives and experts. Approximately 10,000 experts have been identified and listed. The experts' searchable "expert descriptions" serve as expertise locators for users within Caterpillar and throughout its value chain. Thus, users can search online for experts by area of expertise and ask their advice.

In addition, the knowledge network includes "lessons learned", which capture past experience in a formal template and are searchable too. The knowledge network also includes a discussion bulletin board and collaboration tools.

The network is now organized as a social network and thus it is a powerful tool for making personal connections. Users no longer have to rely on a personal network built through years of experience and various job assignments; instead, they rely on a keyword search in the knowledge network. This allows a wheel-loader engineer in China, for instance, to quickly locate a transmission software expert in Europe.

Synchronous online learning allows the virtual delivery of learning across the globe. In this setting, a live instructor interacts with dispersed learners who are attending virtual classes. Online learning saves time and money by allowing information to be distributed quickly and by reducing travel costs. CAT U is conducting about 2,100 classes using synchronous online learning, and more than 300,000 meetings are conducted each year using virtual collaboration systems.

Caterpillar's knowledge sharing technology enables its employees to quickly build both competence and confidence. In addition, the technology infrastructure is an important contributor to business sustainability by dramatically reducing travel and other expenses and increasing employee strategies at the divisions and enterprise levels, Caterpillar is able to improve enterprise performance by providing the right skills and knowledge through learning. This increases people's engagement and discretionary efforts, which lead to better performance. Engagement is the extent to which employees commit, rationally, to the organization, how hard they work as a result of the commitment, and how long they intend to stay. This all provides strategic advantage and leads to a bottom-line benefit, because better enterprise performance results in increased profitability. (In 2006, the system received the prestigious ASTD Excellence in Practice Award, a U.S. National Award.) Finally, the knowledge-sharing platform is so successful that its software and procedures have been sold to other companies.

Source: Compiled from Glynn (2008), Boehle (2007), and jointeamcaterpillar.com.

QUESTION 5

- a) Based on the case study, list out **FOUR (4)** purposes of the CAT Knowledge Network.

(8 marks)

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- b) Outline **FOUR (4)** limitations of e-learning that might be faced by CAT.
(12 marks)
- c) Is Caterpillar University (CAT U) considered as a people-based service? If yes, why? If not, what type of knowledge product should CAT U be and why?
(8 marks)
- d) As mentioned in the case study, Caterpillar allows their employees, dealers, suppliers, and customer to exchange information, share knowledge, ask questions, and contact subject-matter experts around the world through 4,000 communities of practice (CoP). Explain what CoP is and give **FIVE (5)** benefits of such community.

(12 marks)

(Total: 40 marks)

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